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STATE OF MONTANA

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DIVISION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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Ronald L. Rivers, M.D.
State Medical Examiner

Jay M. Glass
Director of Forensic Services

Arnold B. Melnikoff
Laboratory Bureau Chief

WELCOME: Please note that we are no longer in the old Wilma Building. The relocation affords more space for the expansion of our services to you. Come by and tour your facility.

GUNS AND BULLETS

A firearm and toolmark examiner, Bill Newhouse, has joined our staff. Now all weapons and ballistic examinations can be performed in Montana, with a better turn-around time. You will not have to send them to the F.B.I.

ATTENTION CORONERS

Most of you have received the new toxicology collecting kits for autopsy and vehicular death specimens. If you haven't, or need more, or have any questions or complaints, please call Jay Glass or Jeanne Williams.

SKELETONS

Unidentified human bones can be analyzed by the State Medical Examiner to determine the age, sex, race and height. Often many other important criteria can be discovered, utilizing X-ray, ultraviolet light, etc. Dental comparisons can also be obtained.

(This schedule is currently being sent to the coroners, county attorneys, and associate medical examiners throughout Montana. We will gradually expand this circulation to anybody involved in death investigation.)

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

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OF
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May 14, 1981

Gentlemen:

As Montana's first Firearms/Toolmark Examiner and the newest addition to the Montana Crime Laboratory staff, I chose to greet each of the law enforcement agencies and county attorney offices with this letter. The Department of Justice with Attorney General Greeley's determined support has provided the laboratory with instrumentation representing the highest state of the art in the FA/TM examiner's field. If my encounters with Montana law enforcement personnel and attorneys to date are indicative, development of the FA/TM section of the crime lab should progress smoothly.

By way of introduction I wanted to take this opportunity to elaborate on the new services offered by the laboratory with implementation of the firearms/toolmark section. Most of the services noted are available now, though equipment purchases will probably not be completed until July.

1. FIREARMS EXAMINATIONS

   The determination that a specific weapon did or did not fire a bullet or cartridge casing often provides the investigator with the strongest physical evidence. And indication of the type and make of weapon involved is an important investigative lead and determinable from bullet or casing examination. Response time on firearm examinations will frequently be a matter of days and rarely extend beyond two weeks.

2. TOOLMARK EXAMINATIONS

   Confirmation of a toolmark as originating with a specific tool is less frequently obtained than weapon origin identifications, but the confirmation is obviously of no less significance. The nature of toolmark examinations implies a longer response time in most cases than firearms examinations. The investigator should learn to view a toolmark as any mark made by contact of one object with another.

3. WEAPON FUNCTION/GUNSHOT RESIDUE DETERMINATIONS

Each of these examinations is a routine aspect of firearms examination for any examiner. I must be alerted however of those cases where muzzle/target distance determination and weapon operability are of paramount importance. Analytical capability for detecting gunshot residue on hands will probably not be offered until the end of this year.

4. WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION DISPOSAL

Every law enforcement agency obtains weapons and ammunition with adjudication of criminal cases and investigations, usually to the annoyance of the officer responsible for evidence storage. Weapons and ammunition collections are invaluable resources for the firearms examiner when class characteristics, parts, unusual ammo, etc., are needed for a case. Consequently, any weapons or ammunition that a law enforcement agency wishes to transfer to the laboratory will be accepted. I will destroy those weapons duplicated or of no value.

5. COURTROOM TESTIMONY

My testimony in approximately seventy firearms related criminal proceedings in eight years with the California Department of Justice should insure an adequate background for providing similar testimony in Montana. Minor problems with legal interpretive dissimilarities and familiarization with style of testimony presentation might occur but should be of little significance.

In summary if any questions related to firearms or toolmarks is encountered, in a crime investigation or court proceeding, contact me at the crime laboratory.

Sincerely.

DIVISION OF FORENSIC SCIENCE

William L. Newhouse

WILLIAM L. NEWHOUSE
Firearms and Toolmark Examiner

ON CALL SCHEDULE - MONTANA STATE MEDICAL EXAMINER

JUNE, 1981

275 W. Front Street
Missoula, Montana 59801

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
MAY 31st RON RIVERS	1	2	3	4	5	6 KEN MUELLER
7 KEN MUELLER	8	9	10	11	12	13 JAY GLASS
14 JAY GLASS	15	16	17	18	19	20 RON RIVERS
21 RON RIVERS	22	23	24	25	26	27 JOHN PFAFF
28 JOHN PFAFF	29	30				

Telephone Numbers:
State Office - 728-4970
Wats Line - 243-5796

Home Phones: (week nights call)
Ron Rivers - 728-2033 (Home)
Jay Glass - 728-2793 (Home)

John Pfaff - Great Falls
Hospital - 727-3333 - 124 - Julie @ Dr. P's office will verify today
Home - 727-3905 O.K. with Pfaff

Ken Mueller - Billings
Hospital - 657-7000 - 122 Carla Gorrell will verify today
Home - 248-3024 O.K. with Mueller